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EDITORIAL

PAYING A DIRT-CHEAP PRICE.

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IF, in the matter of Chinese exclusion, coming events are foretold by the shadows they cast before them, a more stringent anti-Chinese enactment will soon be the dead letter that the present statutory provisions excluding the Chinese are. With very few exceptions in the Senate and the House, from the President down the sentiment is echoed in chorus that the Chinese exclusion law, about to expire, shall be re-enacted with such improvements and additions as shall “render the law more difficult of evasion” than at present. What makes the prospect of such a prospective dead-letter all the surer is the reason given therefor, to wit, the “universal demand of ‘Organized Labor.’”

Why should not the capitalist political officials yield to this demand? Their yielding amounts to paying a dirt cheap price in exchange for being kept in possession of the political guns of Capitalism. Looked at closer, the price is worse than dirt cheap; it is an exchange of a satchelful of “green goods” or sawdust for a pocket-bookful of greenbacks.

Racial antipathies and the like, “American superiority,” and the like, are all but surface objections raised by the Working Class against the Chinaman. The real objection is that the Chinaman, accustomed to a lower standard of living, underbids the American in the Labor Market. In order to live, the latter, forced to compete with the Mongolian, must submit to lower earnings. This is another way of saying that the American wage-slave is compelled to yield to the American wage-slaveholder, the capitalist, a larger share than he is now forced to yield of the product of his own labor. And, in turn, this is another way of saying that the American capitalist has every interest on earth to allow the Mongolian in. It explains why the present anti-Chinese law is a dead-letter: The class, whose interests are assailed by the anti-Chinese law, being the very class that has all along been entrusted with its enforcement, saw to it that the law was circumvented.

These are conclusions that cannot be run away from, and they stand upon facts

that cannot be successfully gainsaid. Now, then, planting oneself upon this solid ground, what flows inevitably therefrom?

1. Anti-Chinese laws are not simply laws against the Chinese. The term “Anti-Chinese Laws” is a generic term: it covers a multitude of other things: it embraces all Legislative, Judicial and Executive action that makes in favor of the Working Class, and, accordingly, that makes against the Capitalist Class. It covers factory legislation, protecting the life and limb of the workers; it covers minimum wage scales; it covers automatic coupler projects; it covers the conduct of troops, Federal and militia, in cases of strikes; it covers the freedom of labor organization and of executing the resolutions it passes in its own interest; it covers screen-laws, anti-truck systems, etc., etc., among miners; and so down the interminable list;

2. The Capitalist Class is bound to be against all such laws;

3. If, compelled by any exigency—and it can be so compelled only by transitory exigencies—to yield any of these points and to carry out the provisions thus wrenched from its hands, it will unquestionably recoup itself by greater negligence in the enforcement of all the others, and by greater severity in its grinding of the workers;

4. In order thus to be recouped, the Capitalist Class must be placed in possession of the Public Powers; unless so placed, it never could recoup itself; it would even be assailed from all other sides, and go down;

5. It is a life and death question with the Capitalist Class to be placed in possession of the Public Powers; and

6. It is a dirt cheap price, aye, it is the handing over of a satchelful of “green goods” or saw-dust—a law to exclude the Chinese—, in payment or in exchange for the pocketful of labor votes that shall place the Public Powers in the keeping of the Capitalist Class.

There can be no question of a genuine “Anti-Chinese Legislation” so long as the Working Class can be green-goodsed or sawdust-gamed.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.

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